

South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group:

Trustees' Report May 2024

This was the third full year of our Wildlife Group and as well as many positives there were challenges during the year for the group. The group has again been very active and has continued to run a varied series of events in pursuit of our aims - to promote the conservation, protection, and improvement of the environment around us. We have adapted to our new status as a registered charity (CIO) without any significant issues and we have continued to attract grant funding. There is a concern that we are not attracting enough volunteers to take part in some of the events e.g. wildflower surveying, or some of our maintenance work, and we are planning to review this shortly with regard to the set-up of the group.

During the last year we ran the following activities in South Stoke: Wildflower survey programme; Bat survey; Dragonfly survey; Glow worm survey; Hedge planting; No-mow sign competition; Wildflower grow-along; Hedge surveys; Hedgehog surveying/mapping; Invertebrate survey; Fruit tree pruning/maintenance teach-in; Moth trap survey.

We again took a stall at the annual May Fair with the aim of engaging with the community, promoting our activities and raising funds - with the highlight being the 'Name the Hedgehog' cake, which attracted lots of interest and raised significant funds.

Also, for promoting the Wildlife Group's activities (and general enjoyment) we organised two quizzes with a wildlife theme, held at the Perch & Pike and which were both sold out and enjoyed by all attendees. A joint BBQ with the Amenities Charity on the Rec was also held, which again was a community building success and raised awareness of our existence and our aims.

Trustees visited the RSPB Otmoor Nature Reserve, Withymead Nature Reserve and the Trap Grounds in Oxford in order to appreciate other nature reserves and wildlife spaces, with several other visits planned, including the Knepp Estate, Ewelme watercress beds, Lardon Chase and Cholsey Meadows. A joint visit with Mend the Gap in June was made to the Rivers of Life #2 project where we were shown the wetlands restoration project that had been undertaken with the Earth Trust along the Thames above Little Wittenham.

The group had carried out several maintenance sessions up at White Hill Quarry, which is maturing as hoped together with an increase in new wildflowers e.g. pyramidal orchids. A long-term solution for the maintenance work is planned for the site, and joint discussions with the Parish Council are planned for later this year.

SSWCG has continued to use iRecord this year, and now totals 4,349 records in our Activity. The iRecord app is used to enter records from wildflower and glow-worm surveys directly during the events, and it has been used as the basis of a GIS mapping exercise for species location and density conducted by a student at Reading University for their dissertation

We made significant progress on four strategic aims this year:

1. We completed the hedging along the boundary, near Postman's Path including some infill where 2022's planting had suffered from the summer drought conditions, as well as in The Park where it expedited the progress of the project. This year, our volunteers planted just over 200m in total.
2. We continued to work with The Environment Agency, Mend the Gap, TOE and others to work up a long-term vision for specific areas for wildlife improvement and restoration in and around South Stoke. We stepped back from a plan for a potential wetlands restoration of the Lower Meadow, alongside the Earth Trust, as the Parish Council is negotiating a 20 year lease for the site with Christ Church College.
3. We are pleased to see that significant progress has been made on The Park project, although as a group we have only been involved as volunteers and providing specialist advice when asked for by the management group and the Parish Council - as was agreed with them during a November meeting. Despite this, we have had sustained negative comments targeted at us due to our original proposal for a community orchard and growing area on The Park.

In terms of funds SSWCG finished the year with reserves of £923, with income of £3,115 and expenditure of £4,295 over the period. The 'overspend' is essentially a matter of timing with respect to grant expenditure made in and prior to the 2023/24 year. A further grant from TOE was awarded to the group in March for £1,650, to be spent on hedging materials and pond-dipping equipment.

As ever we would like to take this opportunity to thank our many supporters, notably our South Oxfordshire District Councillor who helped us again this year with some generous grant funding. We were also given funds by the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and several individual donors. Also, to local farmers for allowing further hedge planting, hedge surveying and for hosting our wildflower walks. We would also like to thank all of our wonderful volunteers, who pitch up in all weathers, and all of the Trustees who contribute their time, energy and effort into making the group enjoyable and successful.

Ian Haslam, Chair, South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group, May 2024.

South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ending 5 April 2024

	2023/2024		2022/2023
<u>INCOME</u>	£		£
SODC Grant No1	-		3,010.00
SODC EA Grant	-		537.00
SODC EA Grant	930.00		-
CAG Grant	-		100.00
Fund Raising	1,695.32		1,071.20
Gift Aid	67.50		-
Donations			
Cash	379.00		210.51
Go Fund Me	43.67		283.16
Kind	-	422.67	293.85
	<u>3,115.49</u>		<u>5,505.72</u>
TOTAL INCOME			
	£		£
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
Activities	2,509.38		3,057.14
Equipment	662.98		186.99
Website	-		293.85
Marketing & Advertising	956.00		-
Meetings	8.00		-
Insurance	158.92		192.00
Subscriptions	-		-
	<u>4,295.28</u>		<u>3,729.98</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES	(1,179.79)		1,775.74

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 5 APRIL 2024

RESERVES	£	£
As at 6 April 2023	2,103.60	
Excess of Income over Expenditure	(1,179.79)	2,103.60
	<u>923.81</u>	<u>2,103.60</u>
REPRESENTED BY	£	
Balance at Bank as at 6 April 2024		
SODC Grant No1 (2022/23)	-	1,550.32
SODC Everyone Active Grant (2022/23)	159.28	330.91
SODC Everyone Active Grant (2023/24)	44.13	-
General Fund	720.40	222.37
	<u>923.81</u>	<u>2,103.60</u>

Committee Chair:

Ian Haslam

Signed: _____

Date: 21/04/24

Honorary Treasurer:

Mark Taylor

Signed: _____

Date: 21.4.24

I have examined the books, vouchers and bank statements relating to South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group Charity and in my opinion they show an accurate representation of the Group's finances.

Honorary Auditor:

Joe Ritchie

Signed: _____

Date: 1.5.24